



Director of
Central
Intelligence

Top Secret

25X1

Soviet Military Forces in the Far East

National Intelligence Estimate
Volume II—Supporting Analysis



Top Secret

NIE 11-14/40-81X

1 September 1981

Copy 424

25X

Page Denied

Top Secret

25X

25X

NIE 11-14/40-81

SOVIET MILITARY FORCES IN THE FAR EAST

Volume II—Supporting Analysis

Information available as of 28 August 1981 was
used in the preparation of this Estimate.

25

25

Top Secret

Top Secret

25X

25X

THIS ESTIMATE IS ISSUED BY THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE.

THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD CONCURS, EXCEPT AS NOTED IN THE TEXT.

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of the Estimate:

The Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the intelligence organization of the Department of State.

Also Participating:

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force

The Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps

Top Secret

25X

Top Secret

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
PART ONE: SOVIET FORCES IN THE FAR EAST	1
I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	1
A. Background.....	1
B. Defense Spending.....	2
II. TRENDS IN SOVIET THEATER FORCES IN THE FAR EAST	3
A. Ground Forces.....	4
Equipment.....	8
Border Guards.....	9
B. Air Forces	9
[REDACTED]	
D. General Purpose Naval Forces	16
[REDACTED]	
E. Theater Nuclear Forces.....	28
Tactical Nuclear Forces.....	28
[REDACTED]	
F. Chemical Warfare.....	30
G. Biological Warfare.....	30
[REDACTED]	
I. Logistics.....	32
III. SOVIET STRATEGY FOR OPERATIONS IN THE FAR EAST	32
A. Background.....	32
B. Conflict With China	33
[REDACTED]	
IV. PROSPECTS FOR SOVIET THEATER FORCES IN THE FAR EAST.	44
A. Ground Forces.....	45
[REDACTED]	
C. Air Defense Forces	46

Top Secret

Page

D. General Purpose Naval Forces	46
E. Theater Nuclear Forces	46

G. Logistic Support	47
---------------------------	----

PART TWO: COMPARISON OF FORCES ON THE SINO-SOVIET BORDER	49
--	----

I. MILITARY DOCTRINE	49
----------------------------	----

II. FORCES	49
------------------	----

A. Quantitative Trends	49
------------------------------	----

III. CONCLUSIONS	61
------------------------	----

Top Secret

PART ONE: SOVIET FORCES IN THE FAR EAST

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. The Far East is second only to the western theater in importance for Soviet military policy. Soviet military forces in the area are intended primarily to protect the territorial integrity of the USSR—to deter China from taking military action along the Sino-Soviet frontier—and to discourage military activity elsewhere in the region, by either China or other nations, that would be inimical to Soviet interests. Nonetheless, the hallmark of Soviet military strategy is decisive offensive action, and the USSR has substantially expanded and improved its military posture in the Far East during the past 15 years, emerging with a force capable of effective defense and strong offensive operations. In addition, Soviet military power in the region serves as an instrument of a foreign policy program that seeks to contain or reduce China's influence, decrease American and Japanese influence in the region, discourage anti-Soviet policies on the part of Asian governments, and encourage the evolution of a Soviet-sponsored Asian collective security system.¹

2. Several unique factors influence the Soviets' strategy and the development of their forces in the Far East: they must contend with limited local manpower, inhospitable terrain, rigorous climatic conditions, great distances between fronts, poorly developed road and rail networks, the proximity of developed areas and lines of communication to the border, an underdeveloped support infrastructure, the vast distances separating the Far East from Moscow and the Soviet industrial heartlands, and uncertainty over potential enemies.² Over the years the Soviets have evolved a structure for their Far East forces that takes these factors into

account and reflects a systematic effort to support the defense of their territory and improve their offensive capabilities.

A. Background

3. Since the end of World War II the Soviet military posture in the Far East has evolved through four general phases. From the end of the war to the mid-1950s the Soviet Union enjoyed a relatively favorable military position in Asia. Soviet troops were stationed in Manchuria, on Sakhalin Island, and in the Kurils; the Soviets had a naval base at Port Arthur and access to the commercial port of Dairen; Japan was weak militarily; and the Communist takeover in China in 1949 provided Moscow with an ally to help counter US influence in the region. This situation allowed Moscow, even during the height of the Korean war, to give priority to improving its forces opposite the new NATO alliance.

4. In the second phase—from about 1955 to the early 1960s—Soviet perceptions of China as a willing ally began to change. The Chinese differed sharply with Moscow on several issues. These included the extent to which the risk of military confrontation with the West should be pressed, the level of Moscow's military and economic support for China, and what Moscow should receive in exchange for that support. These concerns, coupled with sharp differences in perceptions of national interests, were factors in the withdrawal of Soviet advisers and technicians from China in 1960 and the subsequent Sino-Soviet break. By the end of this period, Soviet military planners were becoming concerned with possible military conflict with China.

5. In the third phase—from the early 1960s to the early 1970s—Soviet security concerns in Asia were further intensified as US forces became involved in Southeast Asia. Beijing successfully detonated its first nuclear device in 1964, and the Sino-Soviet split widened over ideological and territorial differences. As a result of these concerns, the Soviets began to increase force levels along the Chinese border in 1965, and by the early 1970s it was apparent from Soviet

¹ The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, believes that a better balanced and more comprehensive treatment of the objectives and options of Soviet military forces in the Far East is contained in volume I (Key Judgments), of this Estimate, paragraphs 3 and 4.

² See chapter III.

Top Secret

exercises and the major expansion of force levels that Moscow's defense planning was developing on the assumption that the USSR might be drawn into a two-theater war with both China and NATO.

6. In the current phase Soviet military influence in Asia has been highlighted by renewed growth. In Southeast Asia, Moscow established access to Vietnamese air and naval facilities following the Chinese attack on Vietnam in 1979. In addition, the Soviet presence in Afghanistan and a continuing relationship with India have flanked China with countries having close ties to Moscow. The period has also been marked by an increased presence of Soviet military forces to assert the USSR's interests in the Indian Ocean littoral. Despite some gains, however, the USSR has suffered setbacks. Soviet hopes that tensions with China would ease after Mao's death in 1976 remain unfulfilled. Moreover, Moscow's relations with Japan, the ASEAN countries, and even North Korea have suffered.

7. The Soviets are increasingly concerned about the future of the overall military balance in the Far East, an equation in which more than just Chinese forces are a factor. The Soviets must take into account the forces of Japan and the United States and the complex interrelationship of these and other nations' security interests.

8. US forces in the region present both a naval and air threat to the USSR. US naval forces, particularly ballistic missile submarines and carrier task groups, could attack the Soviet mainland or disrupt Pacific Ocean Fleet operations in the area. US aircraft based in Korea and in Japan, even as far south as Okinawa, also could pose a threat to the Soviet mainland, to the Soviet fleet operating in the Sea of Japan, and to naval reconnaissance and antisubmarine aircraft. Soviet planners probably do not believe that Japan's Self-Defense Forces pose any threat to the mainland at present. Nonetheless, Tokyo's potential to improve the capabilities of its forces is, in Soviet eyes, a disturbing factor.

9. The Soviets view China's continuing rapprochement with both the United States and Japan, but particularly the United States, as the most disturbing trend. Events such as the conclusion of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between China and Japan in 1978 and the ongoing process of reconciliation follow-

ing the normalization of US-Chinese relations in 1979 are viewed as posing a serious long-term threat to the security of the Soviet Union which increases the possibility that it might have to fight all three countries in a conflict in the Far East. More immediately, the USSR fears this rapprochement portends active US and Japanese aid in the modernization of the Chinese armed forces.

10. The Soviets recognize that the South Koreans pose no direct threat to the USSR. Moscow probably would not react militarily against them unless the North Koreans were in danger of collapse. Another Korean conflict could lead to increased US presence in the region and could prompt the Japanese to accelerate their effort to improve military capabilities. Moscow also would be concerned about possible Chinese reactions and the possibility of escalation to a wider conflict in the Far East region.

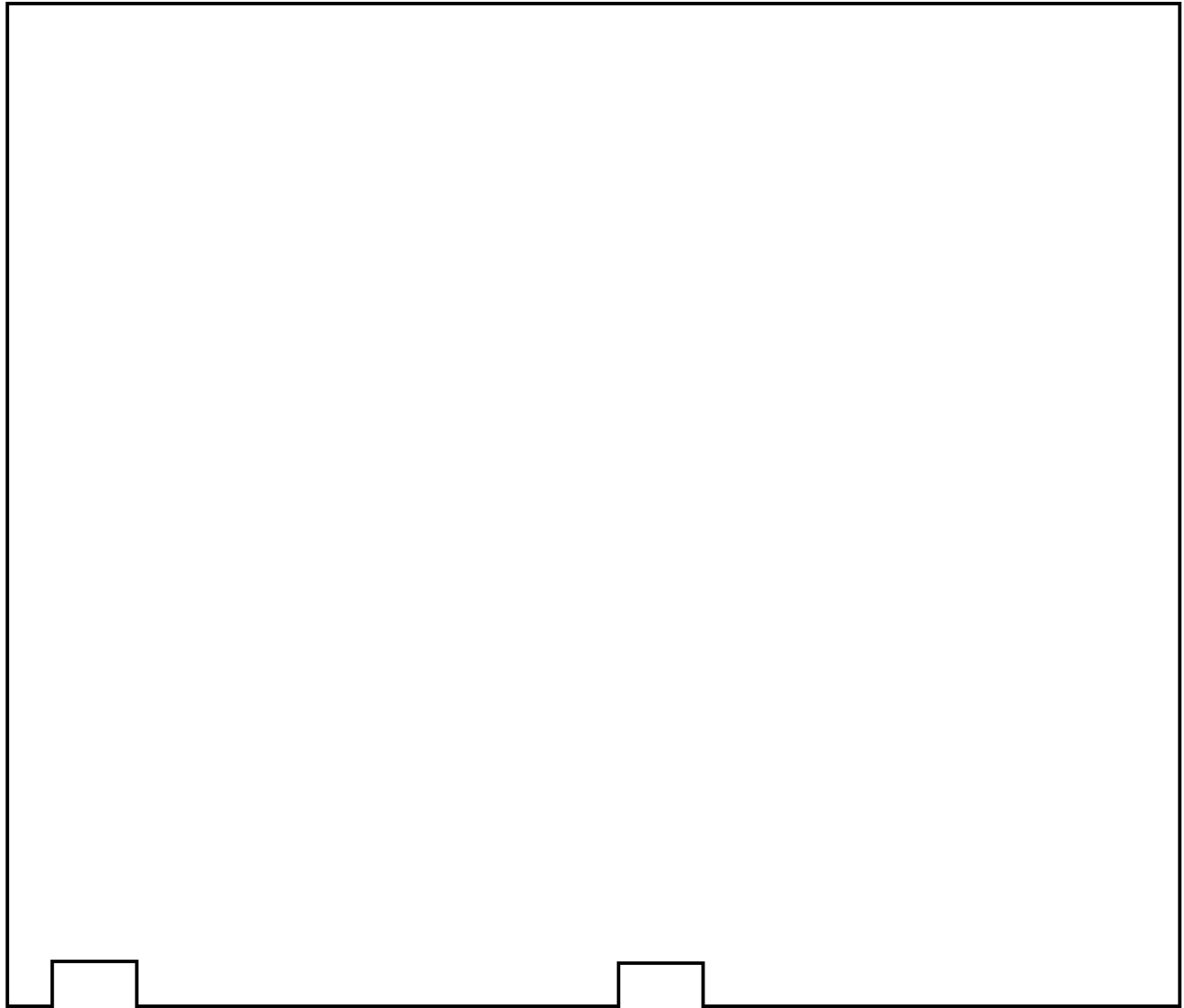
B. Defense Spending

11. The Central Intelligence Agency estimates that, during the period 1966 to 1980, Soviet expenditures for forces in the Far East grew at an average annual rate of 9 to 10 percent, as compared with 4 to 5 percent in total defense outlays. Spending levels on forces opposite NATO, on the other hand, increased slightly less rapidly than overall defense spending. Nonetheless, annual outlays for forces opposite NATO remain more than double those for forces in the Far East.

12. CIA estimates that about 11 percent of total Soviet defense spending in 1966-80 was devoted to investment in and operation of forces in the Far East. Outlays for the Ground Forces and tactical aviation accounted for over half of the Far East spending. About two-thirds of this spending was for forces directly opposite China and can be traced to the buildup along the border in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

³ Examination of Soviet defense expenditures on a regional basis provides an indication of the relative importance that the USSR attaches to its military forces in the region. While this approach cannot be used to make judgments about force effectiveness or capabilities, it does provide a yardstick for assessing shifting perceptions of priorities for force development over time.

Top Secret



II. TRENDS IN SOVIET THEATER FORCES IN THE FAR EAST

13. The USSR began to augment its forces in the Far East in the mid-1960s. Most of this buildup was prompted by increasing concern about the emergence of China as a major rival. Some improvements, however, were intended to counter the influence of the United States and its allies in the region.

14. The buildup of Soviet forces in the region can be divided into two relatively distinct periods. The first—from 1965 through the early 1970s—was char-

acterized by rapid growth of air and ground combat force levels, in large part through the formation of units using obsolescent, mothballed hardware. The period since the early 1970s has been marked by slower growth but with emphasis on the introduction of new, more capable weapon systems into existing units. Also evident during this period are improvements in the combat-support infrastructure and, recently, development of new command structures to better control and use these forces.

15. Soviet theater forces have emerged from this two-phase development process with a more balanced

Top Secret

structure for conventional war and with greatly enhanced conventional and nuclear firepower:

- In the ground forces roughly a threefold increase in the number of divisions has been accompanied by an expansion of support forces and substantial augmentation in the number of tanks, artillery, armed helicopters, and air defenses.
- There has been about a fivefold increase in the number of fixed-wing combat aircraft in tactical aviation, and the Soviets have equipped their air forces with aircraft capable of better performance and possessing increased load-carrying capacity.
- The Pacific Ocean Fleet, which has grown modestly, has been improved by the acquisition of more capable surface combatants, submarines, amphibious ships, replenishment ships, and aircraft.
- There has been substantial growth in the number of theater and strategic nuclear delivery systems available for use in the region.

mid-1960s the number of such divisions in the Far East has almost tripled. Most of this growth took place between 1965 and 1972; the number of active divisions increased from 20 to 42. Since then, nine new active divisions have been established.

The establishment of virtually all of these divisions was prompted by Soviet concerns about China, but by late 1979 the Soviets had established a coastal division on the islands immediately north of Japan to signal Moscow's determination to maintain control of these "northern territories" lost by Japan after World War II.

The Soviets also have 19 tank and motorized rifle divisions in the central USSR—in the Moscow, Volga, Ural, and Turkestan Military Districts—that could be deployed to the Far East.⁴

19. In peacetime, the Soviet Ground Forces are maintained in varying states of preparedness. About 45 percent of the divisions in the Far East are manned at over half their wartime strength, have a full complement of combat equipment, and can be brought up to strength and ready to move within one or two days. Other active divisions have lower manpower and equipment levels.

20. In addition to active divisions, the Soviets have five mobilization divisions in the region (see figure 3). These inactive divisions have a small number of personnel to maintain combat equipment in storage. Because they require extensive mobilization of reservists and materiel and a period of training, we estimate that, once activated, these divisions would take a month or more to become effective fighting units.

21. Although tank and motorized rifle divisions comprise the bulk of the Soviet Ground Forces' com-

⁴ At present, Soviet forces in the Turkestan Military District are committed to support operations in Afghanistan and would be unlikely to be redirected toward China.

A. Ground Forces

17. About 25 to 30 percent of the Soviet Ground Forces' total strength, currently some 435,000 men, is located in the Far East. Most of the forces are garrisoned along the Sino-Soviet border, with a few formations defending the seaward approaches to the Soviet Union. An additional 75,000 men are assigned to KGB Border Guard units in the region.

18. Tank and motorized rifle divisions are the basic tactical units of the Soviet Ground Forces. Since the

Page Denied

Top Secret

25

25

bat power, they are supported by substantial firepower
in front- and army-level combat support units.

25

22. The Soviets also have a series of fortified zones
along the Sino-Soviet border. These
zones, which consist of a combination of static defenses
and mobile troops, are intended to protect Soviet lines

25

25

Top Secret [REDACTED]

25X

of communication and population centers in the Far East. They include bunkered installations equipped with artillery, machineguns, tanks, and defensive obstacles and are occupied by assigned Ground Forces units. They have been established at particularly vulnerable areas to provide for a sustained defense in cooperation with field forces. The zones are designed to limit an invader's freedom of movement while providing time for the Ground Forces' maneuver divisions to mobilize and deploy to their defensive positions.

Equipment

23. The Soviet Ground Forces are not as well equipped in the Far East as in Central Europe. Equipment inventories are being continually modernized through the introduction of improved combat vehicles, support equipment, and weapons designed to increase mobility and provide greater, more accurate firepower. These programs move slowly, however, and many major replacement items are not the newest models. The generally lower priority of ground force modernization programs in the Far East is due, in part, to the low technological level of Chinese forces.

24. At the same time, the Soviet units in the Far East have on occasion been the first to receive new weapon systems and to exhibit new organizational structures. [REDACTED]

25X
25X

25X

25X

Top Secret

Border Guards

31. In addition to troops of the regular armed forces, the Soviets have some 75,000 men assigned to Border Guard units in the Far East. Over 80 percent are in units located along the Sino-Soviet border.

These troops, selected for their political reliability, are regarded as an elite force within the Soviet Union.

32. The Border Guard is subordinate to the Committee for State Security (KGB) and is not part of the regular armed forces in peacetime. Its peacetime missions are to control movement across the borders of the Soviet Union and maintain order in the border areas. In time of war, Border Guard units would be subordinated to the military district commander and would be expected to secure and screen the borders of the USSR in conjunction with the Ground Forces.

B. Air Forces

33. The overall size and capabilities of Soviet Air Forces in the Far East have grown substantially over the past 15 years:

34. The Soviet air and air defense forces throughout the USSR are undergoing major organizational changes apparently aimed at improving the com-

mand and control structure for conducting unified operations in a theater of war. The restructuring of command of these forces will permit some administrative economies in peacetime and will enable wartime commanders to make more flexible use of the forces to support theater offensive operations and to conduct territorial air defense.

Page Denied

Next 3 Page(s) In Document Denied

Top Secret

25X

25X

25X

25X

25X

25X

47. Most of the Pacific Ocean Fleet's assets clearly are directed primarily against US naval forces in the western Pacific and Indian Oceans. Soviet naval planners must also be concerned with the naval forces of China and Japan as well as, to a lesser extent, those of Australia, Taiwan, and South Korea. None of these other forces, however, represent nearly the same degree of threat as those of the United States.

D. General Purpose Naval Forces

45. The Pacific Ocean Fleet [redacted] is the largest of the four Soviet fleets in terms of total assets, probably because it must be prepared to carry out a wide range of naval missions without assistance from the other fleets.

Page Denied

Next 5 Page(s) In Document Denied

Top Secret

25X

25X

E. Theater Nuclear Forces

56. Since the mid-1960s the Soviets have maintained growing theater nuclear forces in the Far East. These include tactical weapons in the hands of the general purpose forces and strategic nuclear weapons.

Tactical Nuclear Forces

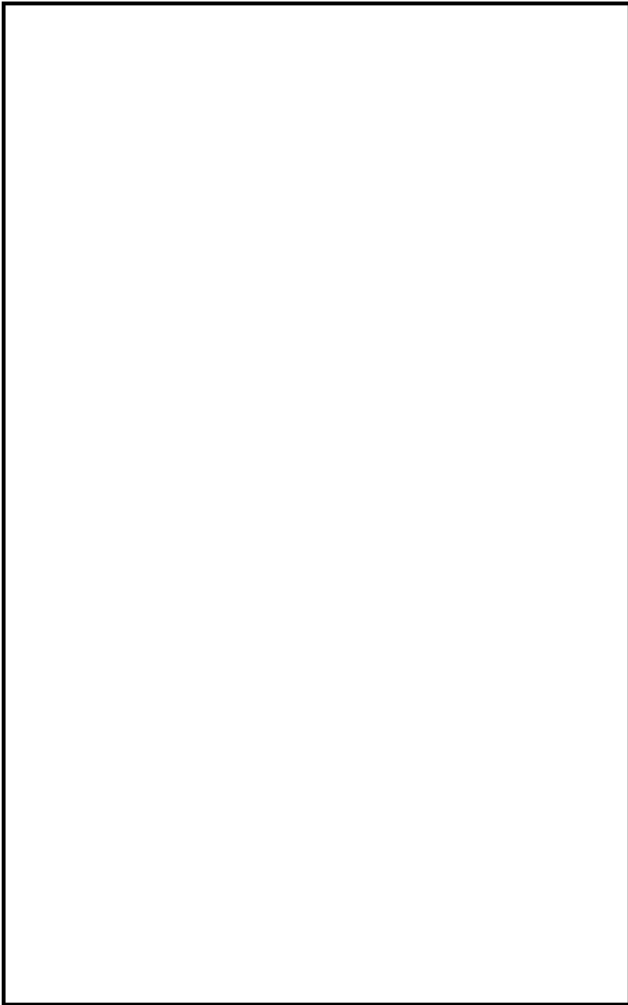
57. Tactical nuclear forces in the Far East consist of aircraft, tactical missiles, and nuclear-capable artillery of the Ground Forces, and elements of the general purpose naval forces [redacted] Through the period, these forces have experienced important changes in both size and capabilities, including growth in the inventory of delivery systems and increases in the yields and accuracy of tactical surface-to-surface missiles.

25X

25X

Page Denied

Top Secret



F. Chemical Warfare

66. The Soviets are clearly planning for the contingency that toxic chemical agents might be used in a war in the Far East.⁶ We estimate that the Chinese have only a limited chemical defense capability and would be vulnerable to chemical attack. The use of chemical weapons would allow the Soviets to neutralize entrenched Chinese defenses more quickly than if they were to rely solely on conventional artillery barrages. The Soviets have produced a variety of modern nerve agents and have the delivery systems, training, and tactics necessary for the large-scale offensive use of these agents.

⁶ See NIE 11-14-81, *Warsaw Pact Forces Opposite NATO*, for a general description of Soviet chemical warfare capabilities.

67. The Soviets are signatories of the 1925 Geneva Protocol which prohibits the use of chemical weapons, although they, like the Chinese and most other signatories, have reserved the right to retaliate against any state or ally of that state which does not observe the provisions of the Protocol.

The Soviets categorize these weapons—as they do nuclear and biological weapons—as “weapons of mass destruction” whose initial use must be authorized at the highest political level.

The Soviets have a substantial advantage over China in chemical warfare capabilities which, in the absence of a substantial Chinese chemical or tactical nuclear retaliatory capability and because of general Chinese vulnerabilities, provides the Soviets with a credible option to initiate chemical warfare if they were to conclude that the situation required it.

G. Biological Warfare

68. The 1925 Geneva Protocol to which the USSR is a party also prohibits the first use of biological weapons in war. In addition, the Soviets have ratified the Biological Weapons Convention, in which the participating states “undertake never in any circumstances to develop, produce, stockpile, or otherwise acquire or retain” biological or toxic weapons. The Biological Weapons Convention permits defensively oriented BW programs.

69. We believe the Soviets have had an active biological warfare research and development program since the 1930s and that Soviet R&D on BW has continued since the BW Convention was ratified by the USSR.



Page Denied

Top Secret

25X

I. Logistics

73. The Soviets have a long supply line from the western USSR to the Far East and only a modest capability within the region to manufacture military hardware and munitions. Thus, they are heavily dependent on pre-positioned stocks. We judge that stocks of major combat consumables in the area—POL and ammunition—are sufficient to support intense ground force operations for one to two months. Naval fuel and ammunitions stores are believed to be sufficient to meet most Pacific Ocean Fleet contingencies. Stockpiles of aviation fuels probably equal or exceed a 90-day supply, but air force requirements for specialized ammunition, including missiles, could create shortfalls in less time, depending on combat roles.

25X

III. SOVIET STRATEGY FOR OPERATIONS IN THE FAR EAST

A. Background

79. This section summarizes our understanding of how Soviet forces would organize and prosecute initial military operations in a conflict in the Far East. Defense of the homeland is the most basic tenet of Soviet military policy.⁷ Nonetheless, the hallmark of Soviet military strategy is decisive offensive action. These concepts explain the emphasis in Soviet military planning on maintaining high combat preparedness, seizing the initiative, and achieving substantial numerical superiority in the main battle areas, backed by strong reserves.

80. In the Far East, as in the west, we expect the Soviets to rely on offensive operations that combine force superiority, combined-arms operations, deception, and tactical surprise to achieve their military objectives.

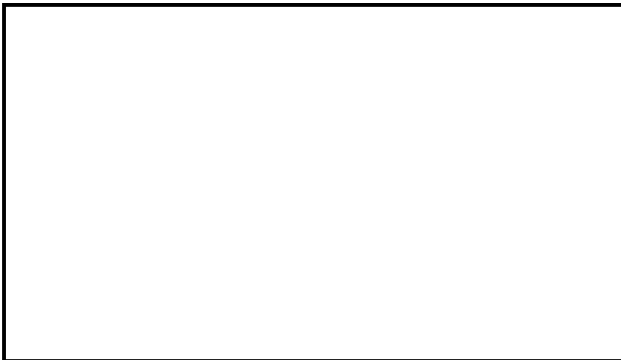
25X

⁷ For a more detailed discussion of general Soviet doctrinal concepts, see NIE 11-14-81.

/

25X

Top Secret



82. Defense planners in Moscow must take into account several potential conflicts in the Far East, including, for example, a direct confrontation with China; a two-front war with NATO and China simultaneously; and actions against US air and naval forces only. The nature and scope of hostilities would greatly influence which Soviet force elements would conduct operations. Conflict solely with China would be primarily a land campaign and would involve the Soviet Ground Forces and the bulk of the air forces. The Soviet Navy probably would not play a major role. Operations against US forces in the region, on the other hand, would take place mainly at sea and would involve the Pacific Ocean Fleet and, to a lesser extent, the air forces. In addition, the course and pace of Soviet operations in the region would be influenced by whether the USSR was fighting only China or was simultaneously at war with NATO.

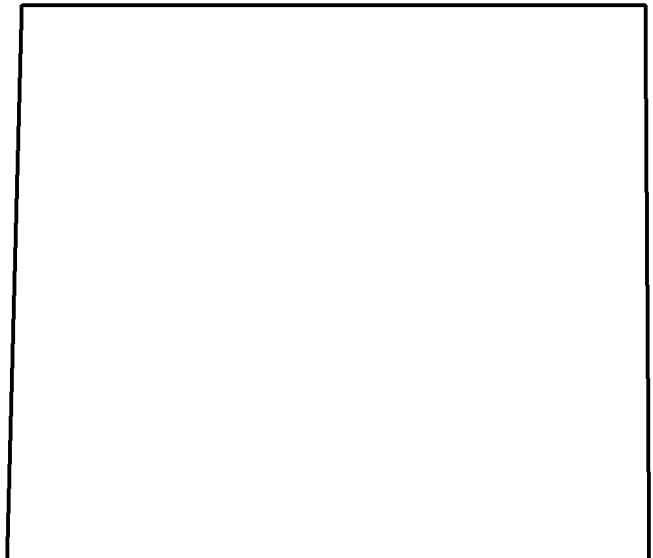
B. Conflict With China

83. The potential for armed conflict with China has long been a serious issue for planners in Moscow. Much of the buildup along the border has been aimed at ensuring Soviet superiority over the full spectrum of possible conflict situations. We believe Soviet forces would respond forcefully and successfully to any Chinese aggression such as border raids, limited punitive attacks, or attempts to interdict Soviet lines of communication. We cannot be certain of Soviet intentions but, in view of their capabilities, initiation of hostilities by the Soviets cannot be ruled out.



84. Over the past 15 years, the Soviets have substantially increased the size of their forces in the Far East—more than we believe would be necessary for a successful defense against China. Soviet Ground Forces units in the region generally are better equipped than Chinese main force units, and they have a substantial advantage in mobility, firepower, and command and control. Soviet tactical aircraft are more capable than those of the Chinese, and the Soviets probably could establish local air superiority early in a conflict.

85. The Soviets have sufficient units, equipment, and supplies in the region to undertake major offensive operations. Initially, Soviet forces would face only token resistance from lightly armed Chinese border defense units; most regular Chinese forces are located 150 to 300 km back from the border. The large number of Chinese main force troops deep in China would necessitate significant reinforcement of Soviet forces to achieve desired force ratios for extended operations. These reinforcements would have to come from the Soviet strategic reserve, but in most circumstances it is unlikely, because of Soviet preoccupation with NATO, that Moscow would draw down these forces substantially. Moreover, once deep into China, Soviet forces would have to fight a well-entrenched enemy in inhospitable terrain from the end of long and tenuous land lines of communication and resupply. These lines would be subject to disruption by Chinese regular and guerrilla forces.



Page Denied

Next 7 Page(s) In Document Denied

Top Secret

25X

IV. PROSPECTS FOR SOVIET THEATER FORCES IN THE FAR EAST

121. We foresee no development over the next several years that would diminish overall Soviet military capabilities in the Far East. On the contrary, we believe that the Soviet effort to maintain and improve the capabilities of the large standing forces in the region will continue, as will the effort to expand logistic support elements. Soviet concerns with the growing Sino-American rapprochement and with the

25X

25X

Top Secret

potential upgrading of Japan's Self-Defense Forces will further prompt these efforts. The USSR might be receptive to an opportunity to slacken the pace of its military buildup that has been under way in the Far East since the mid-1960s, if only because of the current slowdown in Soviet economic growth. But, there is no evidence that Moscow feels constrained to scale down its military forces to free resources for the civilian economy.

122. The Kremlin may, at the same time, be more willing than it has in the past to seek accommodation with Beijing. The Soviets would be particularly interested in counterbalancing growing US-Chinese cooperation, and they may believe that the Chinese are also interested in assuaging the Sino-Soviet border dispute, although in our view the Chinese position remains as firm as ever. Even if negotiations resume, however, they would take considerable time under the best of circumstances, and a thaw in the Sino-Soviet dispute as a factor in reducing Soviet forces in the Far East does not appear likely in the near term.

123. A major Chinese force improvement program focused on introducing advanced weapons technology into Chinese forces—an unlikely prospect even if supported by the United States—could spark unanticipated changes in the Soviet posture in the region. The Soviets initially would most likely respond to even a modest level of Sino-US military cooperation by a combination of diplomatic protest and observable military moves to demonstrate their resolve to counter such a program. The longer term response probably would involve some acceleration of improvement programs already planned.

124. Given current Chinese modernization priorities, we judge that there is little likelihood of a fundamental shift toward military modernization or a substantial Western-supported program to import high-technology weapon systems in the next five years. Consequently, we expect the Soviets to continue their program of gradual but steady force growth and modernization in the Far East.

A. Ground Forces

125. We expect the number of Soviet Ground Forces divisions in the Far East to continue to increase through at least 1985. Evidence suggests that the

number of active, low-strength divisions will increase by about one per year, and there could be as many as two per year. We also expect the number of unmanned mobilization divisions to increase at the same rate. The relocation of some divisions closer to the border and the activation of new divisions to replace them at their old garrisons—coupled with divisional reorganizations and the formation of new nondivisional units—will account for moderate increases in manpower and equipment. Other improvements in the Ground Forces will be aimed at redressing remaining shortcomings in command and control, mobility, air defense, firepower, and logistic support.

127. Soviet interest in increasing conventional firepower will result in continued increases in the numbers of artillery pieces as well as improvements in weapons, target acquisition capabilities, and ammunition. The Soviets will continue the gradual replacement of towed artillery pieces with self-propelled models.

128. Soviet ground force units in the region will continue to improve their air defense capabilities.

Top Secret

25X

25X

25X

25X

C. Air Defense Forces

130. We believe the Soviets will continue to modernize and upgrade their territorial air defense capabilities by deploying new surface-to-air missiles and more capable interceptor aircraft. We also expect them to introduce improved radars having better capabilities for target information handling and data transmission and greater resistance to electronic countermeasures.

D. General Purpose Naval Forces

131. During the next decade, most agencies believe that developments in the Soviet Navy will produce a force with generally improved capabilities to perform its peacetime and wartime tasks, particularly antiship warfare and antiaircraft warfare. Serious deficiencies, however, will continue in other areas, especially anti-submarine warfare. The Soviets also will press forward with programs to attempt to correct shortcomings in other areas, such as submarine detection, reduction of submarine noise levels, comprehensive fleet air defense against cruise missiles, and sustained logistic support for deployed operations. A modest decline is expected in the overall number of Soviet general purpose naval ships and submarines, as newer and more capable units will be replacing older and less effective ones on a less than one-for-one basis.

132. An alternative view¹¹ is that, although overall improvements are likely in the Soviet Navy, relative Soviet naval capabilities in some key areas may actually decline because of the increasing complexity of the Western threat. Soviet capability to conduct ASW operations against Western SSBNs, for example, is likely to decline because any improvements in ASW systems probably will be more than offset by the need to conduct such operations in more extensive ocean areas, particularly in view of the imminent deployment of the Trident system. The overall Soviet capability to provide air defense may also decline because the primary requirement will be protection against

¹¹ The holder of this view is the Deputy Director, Central Intelligence Agency.

Western cruise missiles rather than against manned aircraft. Not only is the effectiveness of even the newest naval SAM systems against such missiles open to question, but during the period of this Estimate most Soviet surface units will be armed with either older SAMs or none at all. Soviet capability for underway logistic support is also unlikely to improve significantly in view of the low priority assigned this task—for example, no underway replenishment ships have been delivered since 1979 and none are under construction. The continuing lack of any significant capability to transfer munitions under way is of particular importance for sustained wartime operations.

133. In the Pacific Ocean Fleet the capabilities of Soviet general purpose naval ships and submarines will grow as newer and more capable units replace older, less effective ones. We believe the Pacific Ocean Fleet will continue to be structured primarily to oppose US naval forces in the region, although the Soviet Navy also may have to devote increasing attention and resources to offset the gradual growth of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Forces. The Chinese Navy, although improving in terms of both operational capabilities and materiel developments, will remain largely a coastal force with little capability to challenge the Soviet Pacific Ocean Fleet in the open ocean.

E. Theater Nuclear Forces

135. **Tactical Nuclear Forces.** The Soviet Ground Forces will continue to improve the quality of their

Top Secret

tactical nuclear forces by deploying new missiles, by introducing improved guidance systems, and by increasing the number of weapons in tactical units.

136. In the tactical air forces the capability for nuclear delivery is expected to increase through modernization and the addition of new units over the next few years. In addition, the availability of low-yield warheads and improved air-to-surface missile guidance systems could lead to the fielding of an air-delivered tactical missile with a nuclear capability in the next few years.

137. **Strategic Forces.** The Soviets will continue to rely heavily on land-based ballistic missiles to conduct nuclear strikes in the Far East region. Some intercontinental missiles may continue to have peripheral missions,

G. Logistic Support

140. Improvements in the logistic support field are also likely.

There probably will be increased mechanization of material-handling procedures, including the computerization of supply depots and automated inventory and requisition control systems. There may also be improvements in transportation, including greater containerization of supplies and equipment, as well as increases in the capacities of cargo carriers, particularly in the area of tactical motor transport. Despite these improvements, however, logistic support will remain a major problem for Soviet forces in the Far East.

Page Denied

Top Secret

PART TWO: COMPARISON OF FORCES ON THE SINO-SOVIET BORDER

142. This part of the Estimate evaluates Soviet and Chinese ground and air forces along the Sino-Soviet border. It provides a comparison of doctrine and strategy as well as quantitative and qualitative comparisons of the forces. The force elements compared in this section include Soviet forces in the USSR's four easternmost military districts and similar Chinese forces in China's four northernmost military regions

I. MILITARY DOCTRINE

143. Defense of the homeland is basic to the military doctrine of both the Soviet Union and China,¹² but the war-fighting strategies of the two nations differ greatly. Soviet strategy is predicated on taking the battle to the enemy. Chinese strategy, on the other hand, is aimed at defeating an invader inside China.

144. Moscow's military policy dictates that the Soviet homeland and lines of communication be defended well forward and that Soviet forces be capable of rapidly mounting an offensive or counteroffensive. The peacetime deployment of Soviet forces in the Far East is dictated not only by this policy but also by the terrain and by the fact that developed areas and lines of communication in the region are generally located close to the frontier. As a result, Soviet forces are clustered in the coastal areas and along the rail lines, which in several areas run within a few kilometers of the Sino-Soviet border.

145. Soviet doctrine for a conventional offensive calls for creating an overwhelming advantage at the point of attack. Planning for attacks against well-prepared defenses, such as those the Soviets would encounter in China, prescribes advantages of at least 3 to 1 in men and artillery and up to 6 to 1 in tanks at the point of attack. The Soviets undoubtedly would seek to exploit the vastly superior mobility of their forces to achieve concentrations that would provide the desired ratios to rapidly penetrate Chinese de-

fenses and to bypass and isolate strongpoints manned by Chinese garrison divisions.

146. China's military strategy is based on a "defense in depth" to contain and defeat an attacker inside China before key industrial and population centers could be reached or before the political objectives of an attacker could be attained. The Chinese plan to trade space for time to bring their significant demographic and geographic assets to bear: a population easily mobilized and larger than the combined populations of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, the world's largest standing army, and extensive and defensible terrain.

147. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is deployed to confront the Soviets with successively larger and better equipped units. Lightly armed, dispersed border defense units would meet an enemy in forward areas, develop intelligence on the hostile forces, and inflict casualties to the degree possible. Better armed regional forces—located 150 to 300 kilometers back from the border—would fight from well-prepared, defensible positions along likely invasion routes, attempting further to channel the enemy into terrain favoring defense. Well-armed main forces would reinforce regional troops on the enemy's main axes of advance, meet any breakthroughs, and delay or destroy enemy forces as they were able. The Chinese plan guerrilla resistance within occupied areas to weaken the enemy—inflicting casualties, hindering supply efforts, and further channeling enemy movements.

II. FORCES

A. Quantitative Trends

148. Over the past 10 years the development of Soviet and Chinese military forces in the border region has differed. The Soviets have increased the number of military units in the region, augmented existing units with additional weapon systems, and carried out extensive weapon modernization programs. The Chinese also have increased the number of military units

Page Denied

Next 7 Page(s) In Document Denied

Top Secret

168. Chinese military advantages lie in the vast expanse of northern China, where much of the terrain favors the defender; a large standing ground force which is deployed, ready, and equipped to fight a conventional defense in depth; and large reserves and a vast supportive population.

III. CONCLUSIONS

166. We believe the balance along the Sino-Soviet border continues increasingly to favor the USSR and is so perceived by the Soviets. Although Chinese manpower in main and local forces in the four northern military regions outnumbers the Soviets

the Soviet forces are superior in weaponry, mobility, and command, control, and communications. The Soviets' ground force equipment is more modern, and they have more tanks, superior artillery firepower, and a monopoly of tactical SAMs and tactical nuclear weapons. Both offensively and defensively, Soviet aircraft are far superior to China's.

167. We believe currently deployed Soviet forces have the following capabilities:

- The Soviets could stop a Chinese general offensive, and are capable of incursions into China with a good chance of initial success.
- The Soviets would require substantial reinforcements, or the use of nuclear weapons, to permit overrunning and seizing Manchuria (the Shenyang MR and the northernmost portion of the Beijing MR).
- In the air, the Soviets should be able to gain local air superiority. The Soviets could blunt Chinese air attacks against Soviet or Mongolian installations and, using relatively secure Soviet airbases, could strike targets throughout China.
- The Soviet Pacific Ocean Fleet, with overwhelming superiority, would predominate at sea and could prevent any significant Chinese naval actions.
- Using strategic air and missile forces, the Soviets could conduct nuclear strikes against any target in China. They also have a substantial advantage in chemical warfare capabilities.
- The Soviets could seize and hold major portions of the Urumqi MR opposite Soviet Central Asia.

169. Perhaps China's greatest asset is an ability to absorb punishment and make the duration and cost of a large-scale invasion potentially prohibitive for the Soviets. China's key installations and lines of communication are well back from the border, allowing the Chinese to choose and prepare the battlefields that most effectively use the defender's advantage. Most of China's tactical airfields are more than 300 kilometers from the Soviet and Mongolian borders, and would get some early warning of attack. Furthermore, China's large inventory of aircraft and hardened underground storage facilities would help the Chinese Air Force survive for an extended period, even if faced with sustained conventional attacks.

170. We believe Chinese forces have the following capabilities:

- The Chinese have perhaps an even chance of stalemating a major Soviet conventional offensive aimed at seizing Beijing and advancing into the North China Plain. Even so, large portions of the Beijing and Shenyang MRs could be overrun and held by Soviet forces, but at great cost.
- The Chinese have only limited offensive capabilities, but could conduct local counteroffensives and extensive guerrilla operations within China. They also could attempt limited, perhaps unconventional, operations against the Trans-Siberian Railroad to disrupt Soviet resupply.
- China's strategic nuclear forces, though relatively small, have a secure retaliatory capability. The Soviets could not be sure of destroying all of China's missile force without suffering retaliatory attacks against Soviet urban/industrial and military complexes, possibly even Moscow.

Page Denied

Top Secret



Top Secret